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ON INITIATIC QUALIFICATIONS

Continued[1]

After the general considerations we presented in the first part of this study, we would need, in order to be more precise, to give well-defined examples of the conditions required for access to this or that initiatory form, and to show in each case their true meaning; but such an exposition, when addressed to Westerners, is rendered very difficult by the fact that they know only an extremely limited number of these initiatory forms, and that references to all the others would risk remaining entirely incomprehensible. Moreover, everything that survives in the West of the ancient organizations of this kind is greatly diminished in every respect, and this is easy to see especially with regard to the very question at hand: if certain qualifications are still required there, it is more by force of habit than by any understanding of their purpose; And, under these circumstances, it is not surprising that members of these organizations sometimes protest against the continued use of these qualifications, seeing in their ignorance only a kind of historical relic, a remnant of a long-vanished state of affairs, in short, a pure and simple "anachronism." However, since one is obliged to take as a starting point what is most readily available, this very fact can provide an opportunity for some observations which, despite everything, are not without interest, and which, although appearing to us primarily as simple illustrations, are nonetheless capable of giving rise to reflections of a broader application than might initially seem. As we have already stated on several occasions, in the Western world, only two initiatory organizations can claim a genuine traditional lineage (without which, let us reiterate, there can only be talk of "pseudo-initiation"): the Guilds and Freemasonry. These are initiatory forms based

1 See No. 196, April 1936, pp. 119 et seq.

essentially on the practice of a craft and, consequently, characterized by specific symbolic and ritual methods directly related to that craft itself. However, a distinction must be made here: in the Guilds, the original link with the craft has always been maintained, whereas in Freemasonry, it has effectively disappeared. Hence, in the latter case, the danger of a more complete misunderstanding of the necessity of certain conditions, which are nevertheless inherent to the very initiatory form in question. Indeed, in the other case, it is evident that at least the necessary conditions for the profession to be practiced effectively, and even for it to be practiced as adequately as possible, can never be lost sight of, even if one considers nothing more than that—that is, if one takes into account only its external rationale and forgets its deeper, truly initiatory rationale. On the contrary, where this deeper rationale is no less forgotten, and where the external rationale itself no longer exists, it is quite natural, in short (which, of course, does not mean legitimate), to come to think that maintaining such conditions is in no way necessary, and to regard them only as troublesome, even unjust, restrictions (this is a consideration much abused in our time, a consequence of the destructive "egalitarianism" of the notion of the "elite"), imposed on a recruitment process that the mania for "proselytism" and the democratic superstition of "the large number," traits so characteristic of the modern Western mind, would like to make as broad as possible, which is indeed one of the most certain and irremediable causes of degeneration for an initiatory organization.

Ultimately, what is forgotten in such cases is quite simply this: if the initiatory ritual takes the craft as its "support," such that it is, so to speak, derived from it by an appropriate transposition (and no doubt, originally, things should be considered in the opposite direction, since the craft truly represents only a contingent application of the principles to which initiation directly relates), the accomplishment of this ritual, in order to be truly and fully valid, will require conditions among which will be those of the very practice of the craft, the same transposition applying there as well, and this by virtue of the correspondences that exist between the different modalities of being; and, by this, it clearly appears that, as we indicated previously, whoever

is qualified for initiation, in a general way, is not thereby indifferently qualified for any initiatory form whatsoever. We must add that the ignorance of this fundamental point, leading to the entirely profane reduction of qualifications to mere corporate rules, appears, at least as far as Freemasonry is concerned, to be quite closely linked to a misunderstanding of the true meaning of the word “operative”; but, as a more complete explanation on this subject would take us too far afield, and since these considerations also involve matters of a very general initiatory scope, we prefer to reserve them for the moment, and we intend to make them the subject of a separate article later.

Thus, if Masonic initiation excludes, in particular, women (which, as we have already said, in no way means that they are incapable of any initiation), and also men who suffer from certain infirmities, it is not simply because, in the past, those who were admitted had to be able to carry burdens or climb scaffolding, as some assert with disconcerting naiveté; it is because, for those who are thus excluded, Masonic initiation as such cannot be valid, so that its effects would be diminished by a lack of qualification. We can say first of all, in this regard, that the connection with the trade, if it has ceased to exist with regard to the external exercise of the latter, nevertheless subsists in another more essential way, insofar as it necessarily remains inscribed in the very form of this initiation; if it were to be eliminated from it, it would no longer be Masonic initiation, but something else entirely different; and, as it would moreover be impossible to legitimately substitute another traditional lineage for the one which exists in fact, there would then not even really be any initiation. This is why, where there remains at least, if not a more effective understanding, a certain more or less obscure awareness of the intrinsic value of ritual forms, the conditions we are discussing here persist in considering them as integral parts of the landmarks (the English term, in this “technical” sense, has no exact equivalent in French), which cannot be modified under any circumstances, and whose suppression or neglect would risk leading to a true initiatory nullity.

Now, there is something more: if we closely examine the list of bodily

defects that are considered as obstacles to initiation, we will find that some of them do not seem very serious outwardly, and in any case, are not such as to really prevent a man from practicing the trade of builder; therefore, there is still only a partial explanation, although accurate to the extent that it is applicable, and that, in addition to the conditions required by the trade, initiation requires others which have nothing to do with it, but which are solely related to the modalities of the ritual work, considered moreover not only in its "materiality", so to speak, but above all as having to produce effective results for the being who accomplishes it. This will become all the more apparent when, among the various formulations of the landmarks (for, although not written down in principle, they have nevertheless often been the subject of more or less detailed enumerations), one refers to the most enduring, that is to say, those which date back to a time when the things in question were still known, and even, for some at least, known in a way that was not merely theoretical or "speculative," but truly "operative," in the true sense to which we alluded earlier. By making this examination, one may even notice something that, certainly, would seem quite extraordinary to some today if they were capable of grasping it: namely, that the impediments to initiation in Freemasonry coincide almost entirely with what are, in the Catholic Church, the impediments to ordination.

This last point is one of those which, to be properly understood, requires some commentary, for one might, at first glance, be tempted to suppose that there is a certain confusion here between things of a different order, especially since we have often insisted on the essential distinction that exists between the two initiatory and religious domains, and, consequently, between the rites that relate respectively to each. However, it doesn't take much thought to understand that there must be general laws governing the performance of rites, whatever their nature, since it is always, in essence, a matter of implementing certain spiritual influences, even though the goal naturally differs from case to case. On the other hand, one could also object that, in the case of ordination, it is properly a question of the aptitude to fulfill certain functions, whereas, with regard to initiation, we have previously emphasized that the qualifications required to receive it are distinct from those that may

be necessary to also perform a function in an initiatory organization (a function primarily concerning the transmission of spiritual influence); and it is true that it is not from this perspective of functions that one must approach the analogy for it to be truly applicable. What must be considered is that, in a religious organization like Catholicism, only the priest actively performs the rites, while laypeople participate only in a "receptive" mode; on the other hand, activity within the ritual order always constitutes, without exception, an essential element of any initiatory method, such that this method necessarily implies the possibility of exercising such activity. Ultimately, then, it is this active performance of the rites that requires, beyond purely intellectual qualifications, certain secondary qualifications, which vary partly according to the specific character these rites assume in a given initiatory form, but among which the absence of certain bodily defects always plays an important role, either because these defects directly hinder the performance of the rites, or because they are the outward sign of corresponding defects in the subtle elements of being. This is primarily what we wanted to emphasize in this part of our presentation; and, fundamentally, what seems to relate more specifically to a particular case, that of Masonic initiation, has been for us only the most convenient way to introduce these considerations, which we will still have to make more precise with the help of some specific examples of impediments due to bodily defects or to psychic defects manifested appreciably by these.

(*to be continued*)

THE ENIGMA OF MARTINES DE PASQUALLY

The history of initiatory organizations is often very difficult to clarify, and this is easily understood by the very nature of the subject, for there are too many elements that necessarily escape the means of investigation available to ordinary historians. To realize this, one need not even go back to very remote periods; it suffices to consider the 18th century, where, still coexisting with the manifestations of the modern spirit in its most profane and anti-traditional aspects, we see what appear to be the last vestiges of various initiatory currents that once existed in the Western world, and during which appear figures who are no less enigmatic than the organizations to which they belonged or which they inspired. One of these figures is Martines de Pasqually; And, regarding the works published in recent years on him and his Order of the Elus Coens by Messrs. R. Le Forestier and P. Vulliaud, we have already had occasion to note how many points of his biography remained obscure despite all the documents brought to light[1]. Mr. Girard van Rijnberk has just published another book on this subject[2], which also contains interesting and largely unpublished documentation; But must we say that, despite this, this book perhaps raises even more questions than it answers?[3]

The author first notes the uncertainty surrounding the very name of Martines, and he lists the many variants found in the writings where it is mentioned; it is true that these differences should not be given undue importance, since, in the 18th century, the spelling of proper names was hardly respected, but he adds: as for the man himself, who, better than

1 A new forum on the Order of the Elus Coens (December 1929 issue); Regarding the Lyon Rosicrucians (January 1930 issue)

2 *Un thaumaturge au XVIIIe siècle Martines de Pasqually, sa vie, son cauere, son Ordre* (Félix Alcan, Paris)

3 1. We should mention in passing a small error by Mr. van Rijnberk. Speaking of his predecessors, he attributes to Mr. René Philipon the historical notices signed "A Knight of the Crescent Rose," which serve as prefaces to the editions of Martines de Pasqually's "Treatise on the Reintegration of Beings" and Franz von Baader's "Secret Teachings of Martines de Pasqually", published in the Rosicrucian Library. Surprised by this assertion, we asked Mr. Philipon himself; he replied that he had only translated von Baader's pamphlet, and that, as we suspected, the two notices in question are actually by Albéric Thomas.

anyone else, should have known the exact spelling of his own name or his pseudonym as head of initiation, he always signed: Don Martines de Pasqually (only once de Pas-qually de La Tour). In the only authentic document known to us, the baptismal certificate of his son, his name is thus formulated as Jaques Delivon Joacin Latour de La Case, don Martinets de Pasqually It is inaccurate to claim that the document in question, published by Papus[4], is the only known authentic document, since two others, which undoubtedly escaped Mr. van Rijnberk's attention, have been published here[5] Martines' marriage certificate and the certificate of Catholicism issued to him upon his departure for Saint-Domingue. The first bears the name Jaque Delyoron Joachin Latour De la Case Martines Depasqually, legitimate son of the late Mr. Delatour de la Case and Lady Suzanne Dumas de Rainau[6]; and the second simply bears the name 'Jacques Pasqually de Latour'; as for Martines' own signature, it is, on the first, Don Martines Depasqually, and, on the second, Depasqually de la Tour. The fact that his father, in the marriage certificate, is named simply Delatour de la Case (as is also the case for his son in the baptismal certificate, although a marginal note calls him de Pasqually, no doubt because this name was more common), seems to support what Mr. van Rijnberk writes next. One would be tempted to deduce from this that his real name was de La Case, or de Las Cases, and that Martines de Pasqually was only a hieronym,
However, this name de La Case or de Las Cases, which may be a Frenchified form of the Spanish name Las Casas, raises further questions; And, first of all, it must be noted that the second successor of Martines as Grand Sovereign of the Order of the Elus Coens (the first having been Caignet de Lestère) was named Sebastian de Las Casas. Was there some kinship between him and Martines? The thing is not impossible: he was from Saint-Domingue, and Martines had gone to that island to collect an inheritance, which may suggest that part of his family had settled there[7]. But there is something else much stranger:

4 *Martines de Pasqually, pp. 10-11-*

5 The marriage of Martines de Pasqually (issue of January 1930)

6 .It was noted that there is such a Delyoron, whereas the baptismal certificate bears the name Delivon (or perhaps Delivron): this name, being inserted between two given names, does not appear to be a family name. Furthermore, it hardly needs to be recalled that the separation of particles (which do not necessarily constitute a sign of nobility) was then entirely optional

7 It is true that there were also relatives of his wife in Saint-Domingue, so that it is possible that the in-

L.-Cl. de Saint-Martin, in his Crocodile, features a Spanish Jew named Eleazar, to whom he clearly attributes many traits of his former master Martines; or here is how this Eléazar explains the reasons why he had been forced to leave Spain and take refuge in France: "I had in Madrid a Christian friend, belonging to the Las-Casas family, to whom I owe, albeit indirectly, the greatest debts. After some prosperity in business, he was suddenly ruined utterly by a fraudulent bankruptcy. I immediately went to his house to share in his sorrow and offer him the few resources my modest fortune allowed me to have; but these resources being too meager to put him on par with his affairs, I yielded to the friendship I felt for him and allowed myself to be drawn into this movement, even resorting to certain special means that helped me soon uncover the fraud of his plunderers and even the hidden place where they had deposited the riches they had taken from him. By these same means, I made it easy for him to recover all his treasures and have them returned to him, without even those who had stolen them being able to suspect anyone of having deprived them in turn I was wrong, no doubt, to use these means for such an object, since they should only be applied to the administration of things unrelated to worldly riches; and so I was punished for it. My friend, instructed in a timid and suspicious faith, suspected sorcery in what I had just done for him; and his pious zeal prevailing over his gratitude, just as my self-serving zeal had prevailed over my duty, he denounced me to his church, both as a sorcerer and as a Jew. The inquisitors were immediately informed; I was condemned to be burned at the stake, even before being arrested, but at the very moment they were about to prosecute me, I was warned by that same private voice of the fate that threatened me; and without delay, I took refuge in your homeland"[8].

Undoubtedly, there are many purely fantastical elements in The Crocodile, where it would be very difficult to see precise allusions to real events and people; it is nonetheless highly improbable that the name of Las Casas appears there by mere chance. This is why we thought it worthwhile to reproduce the passage in its entirety, despite its length:

heritance came from that side however, the letter published by Papus (Martines de Pasqually, p. 58), without being perfectly clear, is rather in favor of the other hypothesis, for it does not appear that his two half-brothers who were in Saint-Domingue had any interest in the donation that had been made to him.

8 The Crocodile, song 12

what exactly could there be between the Jew Eleazar, who so closely resembles Martines in the powers and doctrine attributed to him, and the Las Casas family, and what could be the nature of the great obligations he owed them? For the moment, we are only formulating these questions, without claiming to offer any answer; we shall see if what follows allows us to consider a more or less plausible one[9].

Let us turn to other points in Martines' biography, which hold no fewer surprises: Mr. van Rijnberk says that the year and place of his birth are completely unknown; but he points out that Willermoz wrote to Baron von Türkheim that Martines died at an advanced age; and he adds: At the time Willermoz wrote this sentence, he himself was 91 years old. As men have the general tendency to evaluate the age of other mortals according to a measure that increases with their own years, there should be no doubt that the advanced age attributed to Martines by the nonagenarian Willermoz must have been no less than 70. As Martines died in 1774, he must have been born at most in the first ten years of the 18th century. He therefore leans towards the hypothesis of Gustave Bord, who places Martines around 1710 or 1715; But, even taking the first date, that would make him die at 64, which, to tell the truth, is still not an advanced age, especially compared to Willermoz's... And then, unfortunately, one of the documents of which Mr. van Rijnberk does not seem to have been aware, gives a formal rebuttal to this hypothesis: the certificate of Catholicism was issued in 1772 to Mr. Jacques Pasqually de Latour, squire, born in Grenoble, aged 45; from this we would have to conclude that he was born around 1727; and, if he died in Saint-Domingue two years later, in 1774, he only reached the very young age of 47!

This same document also confirms that, as many had already said, but contrary to the opinion of Mr. van Rijnberk who refuses to admit it, Martines was born in Grenoble. This does not, of course, preclude him from having been of Spanish origin, since, among all the origins that have been attributed to him, it is in favor of this one that there seems to

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9 Yet another bizarre connection: Saint-Martin represents Las Casas, Pami du Julf Kléazar, as having been spoliated of his property; Martines, in the letter we have already mentioned, says, "I have been given in that country (that is to say, in Saint-Domingue) a donation of a great property which I am going to take back from the hands of a man who is unjustly holding it," and it turns out that this letter was written, at Martines's dictation, by Saint-Martin himself.

be the most evidence, including, of course, the very name of Las Casas; But then we would have to admit that his father was already established in France before his birth, and that perhaps he even married in France. This is further confirmed by Martines' marriage certificate, since his mother's name, as it appears there, Dame Suzanne Dumas de Rainau, can hardly be anything other than a French name, while Delatour de la Case's name may simply have been Gallicized. Ultimately, the only truly serious reason to doubt that Martines was born in France (since we can hardly take into consideration the contradictory assertions of various people, which are all mere suppositions), lies in the linguistic peculiarities found in his writings; but, in fact, this can very well be explained partly by the education he received from a Spanish father, and partly also by the stays he probably made in various countries. We will return to this last point later.

By a rather curious coincidence, which hardly simplifies matters, it seems established that there was in Grenoble, at the same time, a family whose name was indeed Pascalis; but Martines, judging by the names appearing on the documents concerning him, must have been completely unrelated to him. Perhaps it was to this family that the coachbuilder Martin Pascalis belonged, who is also called Martin Pascal or even Pascal Martin (for, on this point too, we are not entirely certain), if indeed he is truly a distinct person, and if it is not simply Martines himself who, at some point, must have taken up this trade to earn a living, for, apparently, his financial situation was never very prosperous; this, too, seems never to have been clarified in a satisfactory way

On the other hand, many have thought that Martines was Jewish; he certainly was not Jewish by religion, since it is abundantly proven that he was Catholic; but it is true that, as Mr. van Rijnberk says, this in no way prejudges the question of race. There are indeed, in Martines' life, some indications that might suggest he was of Jewish origin, but these are by no means decisive, and can just as easily be explained by affinities of a completely different kind than a shared race. Franz von Baader says that Martines was both Jewish and Christian; does this not recall the relationship between the Jew Eleazar and the Christian family of Las Casas? But the very fact of presenting Eleazar as a Spanish Jew may very well be an allusion, not to Martines' personal origin, but to

the origin of his doctrine, in which, indeed, Jewish elements undeniably predominate

In any case, there still remain, in Martines' biography, a number of inconsistencies and contradictions, among which the most striking is undoubtedly that which relates to his age; but perhaps Mr. van Rijnberk is unwittingly indicating the solution by suggesting that 'Martines de Pasqually' was a 'hieronym' that is to say, an initiatory name. Indeed, why should this same hieronym not have served, as has happened in other similar cases, for several distinguished individuals? And who knows if the 'great obligations' that the character whom Saint-Martin calls the Jew Eleazar had to the Las Casas family were not due to the fact that the latter had provided, in one way or another, a kind of "cover" for his initiatory activity? It would undoubtedly be unwise to try to be more specific; however, we shall see whether what can be known about the origin of Martines' beliefs might not shed some further light on the matter.

(*To be continued*)